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ABSTRACT

At the heart of all human learning is the person seeking to grow, develop, and realize something of value in and through another person. Learning is essentially dependent on the relationships between student and teacher, and between the students themselves. In that all knowledge is value-based and developed to achieve something of personal significance, it is bound up with personal identity. Teaching requires disclosure of personal investment in meanings and learning involves a challenge to present investments. Especially among adults, then, both teaching and learning can automatically produce anxiety and activate defense mechanisms which can hinder the process. In order for information to become a source of growth for the learner, a way must be provided for him or her to become self-invested in a holistic manner. That is why counseling is seen as an intrinsic part of the educational process. Counseling psychology can help individuals to understand the dynamics of learning and to develop the skills to work with those dynamics. The central skill of any counseling relationship is empathic understanding. Where both teachers and students are able, through empathic understanding, to create an environment of mutual trust and security, a truly growing learning experience can take place which enhances both the capacity to stand for one's personal meanings and the ability to understand and benefit from the personal meanings of others which are different. (Author/NB)

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A COUNSELING-LEARNING APPROACH TO HOLISTIC EDUCATION: A THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL EXPLANATION OF THE HYPHEN

Bernard D. Green

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COUNSELING-LEARNING APPROACH TO HOLISTIC EDUCATION.
(Abstract.)

Bernard D. Green.

LEARNING IS PERSONS: ie. it is essentially dependent on the relationships between student and teacher, and between the students themselves. In that all knowledge is VALUE-BASED, developed to achieve something of personal significance, it is bound up with personal identity -- the meanings one is identified with as being personally significant. Teaching requires disclosure of personal investment in meanings and learning involves a challenge to present investments. Especially among adults, then, both teaching and learning can automatically produce anxiety and activate defence mechanisms which can hinder the process. Counseling psychology can help us to understand these dynamics and develop the skills necessary to work with them. The central skill is that of empathic UNDERSTANDING. Where both teachers and students are able, through empathic understanding, to create an environment of mutual trust and security, a truly growthful learning experience can take place which enhances both the capacity to STAND-FOR one's personal meanings and the ability to understand and benefit from those of other's who are different.

A COUNSELING-LEARNING® APPROACH TO HOLISTIC EDUCATION.

-A theoretical and practical explanation of the Hyphen.-

by

Bernard D. Green.

THE NATURE OF LEARNING.

Introduction.

Recently David Kolb made the following comment about learning: "We have cast our lot with learning, and learning will pull us through. But this learning process must be reimbued with the texture and feeling of human experiences shared and interpreted through dialogue with one another. In the over-eager embrace of the rational, scientific, and technological, our concept of the learning process itself was distorted first by rationalisation and later by behaviorism. We lost touch with our own experience as the source of personal learning and development and, in the process, lost that experiential centeredness that has been progressively slipping away since Copernicus." (Experiential Learning. Prentice-Hall. 1984 P2.)

It is these notions of experiential centeredness and interpersonal dialogue that we are centrally concerned with in this paper. Very simply put our approach to learning is person-centered but not in the way that that is normally understood. As we see it, LEARNING IS PERSONS, in the sense that the learning process, on both sides of the equation, student and teacher, is a matter of the whole person, heart as well as head, emotions and instincts as well as intelligence and reason. At the heart of all learning is the human person seeking to grow and develop and realise something of value in and through another human person who is already committed to a particular area of knowledge as having personal importance. It involves, then, not just abstract or factual information but also its significance, its place in a framework of values.

Learning, then, is essentially a matter of personal engagement, and it is the depth and quality of that engagement which dictates the nature of the learning process. This engagement touches all aspects of those involved. It is a matter of the teacher's own engagement with *himself as well as with the students; and likewise the student's relationship with his own inner being as well as with the teacher. Finally it concerns the level of engagement between the students themselves. So we are not simply talking about learning from experience, or the way in which learning is related to life-experiences outside of the classroom, though that comes into it, but the experience itself of learning and teaching.

*Despite its inadequacy, the generic 'He/His will be used throughout this papaer simply for stylistic reasons.

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Expectations of education.

As we know there is a great deal of concern about education today. Anxieties have been expressed about the quality of the teachers, falling standards, and drop-out rates etc. These concerns simply emphasise that as a society we expect a great deal from education. We are the first society in history to attempt the education of its whole population to the very highest levels of which they are capable and to make that education available from cradle to grave.

It is true to say, I think, that we have such respect for the power of education that whenever a new problem arises in society to trouble us, the solution that is invariably reached for is education. However, while one would not wish to deny its necessity in combatting social problems, I think it is also fair to say that the suspicion is arising that, of itself, education, at least in the sense we have come to understand it,-- as the passing on of information, -- simply is not enough. At the moment, drug taking seems to be among the most troublesome of current problems and a great deal of effort is going into education to try and combat this evil. However, to my knowledge it does not appear that of itself it is making very much difference, cocaine abuse, for instance seems, in fact, to be on the increase. Maybe we expect too much from education or maybe the sort of notion we have of education is inadequate. Of the two it is the latter that we are primarily concerned to explore.

Education needs personal embodiment.

What seems to make the difference is not education alone but a change in social outlook regarding a particular activity and this seems to depend, not simply on the possession of more information but, through peer relationships, a change in an experientially based vision of what is ideal. The data that constitutes the core of the education, especially as this comes to us through the mass-media only seems to become effective when it is embodied in a person who possesses some social influence. We call these particular people, 'trend-setters'. They are people who are socially very powerful in influencing styles of life and attitudes etc. such that, if they change, others around them change. Wolvin and Coakley writing about the educative influence of the mass media, have said: "Although studies of the mass media have demonstrated that the spoken word is influential in the formation of habits and attitudes, they have also revealed that the mass media do not have as much direct influence on us as do our interpersonal contacts. Results of several early experiments led Katz to hypothesise that any effect of the mass media on the general public normally operates through a "two-step flow of communication"; that is, ideas flow from the mass media to 'opinion leaders' (friends, co-workers, family members, or any 'significant' others), and from them to the rest of the community. Thus, personal contact serves to influence us more than the mass media." (Listening. W.C.Brown. 1982. P12.)

These 'opinion leaders' would seem to be able to both reflect the ideals of the group and also dictate the form of the group.

If, while retaining their embodiment in the group, they change with regards to significant behaviors then others seem to change. If pop-stars, while remaining pop-stars, for instance, genuinely give up certain attitudes and habits as being 'not cool' then it changes the attractiveness of those habits for those to whom they are significant. It is here that we see most clearly that learning is persons. It gives us a clue to an important facet of the learning process that we believe we have overlooked in current educational practice: that it is not simply education that makes the difference but a change in the inner complex of VALUES which dictate what it is that we see as desirable or not. Values, that is, not in the abstract, but as embodied in a person such that they are known experientially in a sort of gestalt way, in an undifferentiated wholeness so to speak. It is something about our experience of the embodied investments of a person that fires us to learn something new and so make changes in our behavior.

Until the concepts, then, which we look to pass on to people are embodied in the living experiential reality of a person, they remain simply abstract. Only when they are incorporated into the life of another who has some significance for us and so are experienced as resulting in a more desirable life-style, do they begin to have a real influence on us. At the heart of learning, then, is a personal relationship and the dynamics that are involved in personal relationships are crucial to the learning process.

Combs, Richards and Richards put it this way: "There is a vast difference between knowing and behaving. Knowing comes from getting new information. Change in behavior comes from the discovery of personal meaning." (Helping Relationships. Allyn and Bacon. Boston. 1978 P58.) Learning, then, essentially, means a change in personal meaning, a revised understanding of who one is and what one is capable of becoming and the acquisition of the ability to do it. While concepts as such can be learned and retained through memorisation, until in some way those concepts have become embodied in the experiential life of the person, such that his capacities for new behavior has been enhanced, real learning has not taken place.

The core of education: mimesis.

As we would put it, we change by taking on a new 'form' as a person: true learning is a matter of becoming like another who has some personal significance for us and our fulfilment as human beings, and through that person to enter into a new way of seeing the world and relating to it. We term this the process of MIMESIS. In education it means essentially that one truly learns around a particular area of knowledge only to the extent that one is able to take on the form of the one teaching it and inform it with one's own personal uniqueness. Only then does the data become in-form-ation. Information, then, is not simply the factual data such that we can get from any external source but an action whereby the data become a part of one's own operational self, enlarging one's world view and behavioral possibilities.

We call this whole process of learning through a mimetic relationship with persons, AGGREGATE EMPATHIC LEARNING. It is aggregate because it takes in the whole person, not just intellect but heart too, it touches the emotional and instinctual and social dimensions of the person. It is empathic in that it depends upon the ability to enter into the subject through another and feel with them around the area of concern. You identify with the other in their area of expertise and come to see life from their perspective around the area of concern or interest.

This, then, is the central theme of this talk: that learning is a matter, not only of knowing abstract meanings but also of introjecting them experientially. Knowing abstract data, simple information, is at best only a beginning. True learning does not take place until what is learned cognitively actually makes a difference in the way a person comes to view the world and its significance, at least in the sense that they are able to discern possible alternative ways of seeing the meaning and significance of a particular dimension of experience and of operating in it.

MOTIVATION AND THE LEARNING PROCESS.

The use of manipulation.

While we do not wish and have no need to abandon notions and skills developed out of other perspectives, embodied in what is currently known as learning theory -- we are not trying to play down their importance -- we think there is a missing ingredient in our present approach to the learning process. What we need to look at are the factors which enable one person to invest in what another person stands for and represents.

This immediately involves us in a concern with what motivates a person to learn and grow, whether that be in terms of his idiosyncratic life-situations or around some area of knowledge represented by the teacher. Concerns about motivation, then, are central to research in both counseling and education. However, what that has usually meant is that either the teacher or the counselor has the responsibility of discovering the motivational patterns of the students and clients and presenting the requisite information in such a way as to plug into those motives. It has, then, been essentially a matter of what we might call benevolent manipulation; presenting the material in such a way as to arouse the interest of the student and enable him or her to understand it sufficiently and retain it long enough to pass an examination.

Though he never intended his work to be used in this way, many have found in Maslow's heirarchy of needs a way of understanding the human person that would enable us to manipulate them fruitfully. If we can discover the dominent need that a person may have at any particular moment, we can then link the material to it in such a way as it is seen relating to its satisfaction in some way. This is the whole basis of advertising and propaganda. When used in the educational process, the onus on the teacher to figure out what is making the student tick and then using this in

the way he or she puts the material across so that the person will engage with the material and so retain it.

Manipulation and techniques.

While this might within a certain context have validity and be helpful, and we will look at how this is so later, as a first approach seeking to teach through manipulation has many weaknesses and dangers. Whether used in interpersonal relationships in general, business or political life, or in counseling and education, it has tended to result in what we might call technicalised relationships, relationships based on technique rather than genuine encounter.

We have, in fact, in both counseling and in education come to rely very heavily upon techniques to achieve our goals. Mahoney in a recent edition of 'Counseling and Values' has written: "An important feature of contempory clinical and counseling psychology (as well as psychiatry) is a pervasive emphasis on the mastery of techniques. Whatever their theoretical origins, those techniques are described and taught to and by professionals as if they were the core of our personal knowledge. Thus the modern counselor becomes proficient in an often parochial subset of skills ranging from reflective listening and values clarification to desensitization, paradoxical intention, and dream interpretation. Workshops for professionals and the general public promise fast and facile expertise in powerful methods of self-, other, and system change. Level after level, western [society] is a culture enamoured with learning how to do it, as if there were no limits and differences in individual capacities to change." (Vol 30. No.2. April 1986) The word "education" could easily be substituted here for 'counseling'.

Techniques are somewhat impersonal tools by which we can get something effectively achieved. We use them and then, when we have achieved our purposes, simply lay them aside. Inasmuch as they are preset ways of functioning effectively within a particular area, they are based upon the ability to accurately discern the 'lawful' dynamics of particular situations, the regular patterns of action and reaction which dominate their functioning, and on discovering the most effective ways of manipulating these to achieve the desired results. They depend for their effectiveness, then, on the capacity of the area in question to being manipulated ie. it must have patterns which are stable and consistent and respond in predictable ways. While in many ways we as human being do have regular patterns of perception and behavior, and to what extend is rather humbling to realise, and hence are vulnerable to manipulation, nevertheless, there are limits to this which need to be recognised. There is something about the human person that escapes predictablity. In fact we define a human being in contra-distinction to a mechanical reality precisely by the fact that he is capable of a certain self-consciousness and self-determination which frees him from being simply determined by impersonal forces. To grow and develop is to become more conscious of one's self and one's world and more capable of

self-determined action within it in accordance with rationally discerned values.

Since, in both education and in counseling, it is this we are seeking to augment and actualise, manipulative techniques are inherently inadequate. In that they operate on unconscious mechanisms, they move rather to a depersonalising and mechanising the human person. We may in fact be able to influence others to change through manipulation, but we are not necessarily enabling them to grow. Growth would seem intrinsically to involve an increase in personal consciousness and a greater choice in behavioral responses, in other words, greater freedom to decide what they are to be and become.

It is not that techniques of themselves are necessarily bad, and there may in fact be times when it is valuable to use them, it is the use of them as a primary tool that renders them deficient. They can, if one is not careful, take the place of the personal relationship that is at the core of the process, and indeed be used precisely to avoid that engagement. In that, if they are good techniques, they should be effective no matter who is using them, we do not as unique individuals have to be personally identified with them. We can master techniques while remaining personally detached from them. Inasmuch then as we are not reallly present to another in and through them, they put a gap between us and the other person.

Secondly, the use of techniques in order to manipulate others, even when done for their own good, depends primarily on their not being aware of what you are doing. It is precisely the lack of consciousness of what is happening that enables them to be effective. If one becomes conscious that one is being manipulated through some technique, that technique will automatically lose something of its effectiveness. One of the reasons techniques in counseling, such as reflective listening, seems to be 'ineffective' today is precisely because they are known as a technique by those who come to us for help. If the client thinks that the counselor is using the technique of reflective listening in order to get them to open up and disclose then he will take that into account in the way in which he responds: it has then lost its power as a technique.

To work out of a manipulative framework, then, is to create an implicit barrier to engagement in the experiential moment of encounter between both student and teacher: each is in fact holding themselves aloof from that encounter. Indeed they are not just holding themselves aloof but, if manipulation is suspected are also in somewhat of a competitive stance vis a vis one another, the one trying to manipulate, the other seeking to neutralise it and so retain a certain freedom of operation and response. We see this then as a major barrier to the true engagement of one person with another in the learning situation.

To be effective, a technique, whether in counseling or in education, has to remain subtly hidden from the person on whom

it is being used. It has then a built-in inauthenticity about it. It is based upon a certain superior-inferior way of viewing the situation that must however be denied in practice. This, today, is becoming more and more difficult to do. We live in such a manipulative society with so many books around which detail ways of manipulating that we have become hypersensitive to what others are doing to us. Particularly in the classroom we will find students asking themselves: 'why is the teacher doing or saying that?" "what is it they are trying to achieve?" They assume some hidden reason behind what the teacher does, and, if the teacher claims innocence of any ulterior motives, he or she is likely not to be believed.

Thirdly, with all the best presentations in the world, using all the best motivational tools we know how, true learning does not take place until the person himself sees the material as having some personal relevance to his fulfilment as a human being. As Vargiu says: "What motivates us at any moment is the sense that there is something worth achieving, something that has value and meaning." (Vargiu and Firman. Dimensions of Growth. Synthesis Vol.3-4.) It has somehow to become intrinsic to his value system. For this to happen he needs to discover its connection with his experience, come to see how it sheds light upon it and enables him to discriminate its meaning more clearly. Only then will he be able to discover its personal significance and so internalise it in a holistic way. This ultimately escapes the control and expertise of the teacher, it is dependent upon the student's own willingness to open up to and become engaged with the material in a personal way in order to sincerely discover what light it might shed on his experience and what value it might have for him. This simply cannot be manipulated out of the student.

Technique not sufficient.

In the concentration on the learning of techniques, then, whether those be of presentation or relationship, the central factor has still not been addressed: how does learning become personal? In our attempt to answer this question, we would like to be clear that we are not talking either about manipulation or a new set of techniques to be used in the classroom setting. We are concerned, rather, with trying to discover the conditions and skills that make real learning possible. What are the conditions that are essential if learning is to become an operational part of a person's experiential reality such that it actually contributes to the actualisation of his potentialities as a human being? What are the skills that the teacher needs in order to facilitate the process?

COUNSELING AND THE EDUCATION PROCESS.

In looking for conditions and skills we are taking into account that there is no way in which we can guarantee success in the learning process. Whether learning takes place or not is something that is essentially unpredictable. However, we think that it is possible to discern something of the dynamics which are operating which will enable a learning environment to emer-

ge. Essentially what we have been looking for in our research are the conditions that allow for and encourage the personal investment in new meanings. To understand this we think that we can draw very fruitfully on what we have learned in counseling psychology which itself is centrally concerned with the conditions and skills involved in enabling personal change to take place.

Counseling as such deals with enabling a person to learn new ways of thinking and feeling about themselves and learning more adequate ways of behaving in terms of their relationships beyond the counseling process itself. However, when talking about counseling as being essential to education, we are talking about the conditions which make possible the investment of the student in the ideas and perspectives which are being presented by the teacher such that they enable the student to see and perceive a particular area of experience in a new way and so become a real source of growth for him or her. This is, then, very similar to the counseling situation in that there too we are primarily concerned with the conditions which enable a person to change his 'form', discover the inadequate ways of being which have dominated him or her up to the present, and discover a more adequate 'form', one which will enable the person to be more flexible in life and have more behavioral possibiliities.

The core of counseling: understanding.

Whatever else we might do in counseling, there seems to be an agreement that central to the whole process is first of all an environment of respect for and acceptance of the client as they are rather that as we would like them to be. We work with the client as they come to us, just as they are in all their human confusion and inadequacy and we provide them with a secure and trusting atmosphere in which they can be themselves and actually begin to touch and articulate who they are without fear of being rejected. As Godfried and Padawar put it in their study of the common ingredients of therapy, it is a particular quality of relationship...." ...whereby a warm, understanding and nurturing therapist wins the trust and respect of the patient or client. This in itself is believed to have a beneficial effect, as it is relatively rare for people to experience interactions with others in our society who are willing to listen sympathetically." (Converging themes in Psychotherapy. Springer Publ. 1982. P16)

The second ingredient is the skill of the counselor in being able to sensitively enter into the world of the client and articulate what it is that is being communicated, albeit haltingly and disconnectedly. This is the ability to be empathic. Across the board in therapy today, even in psychoanalysis which is the most interpretive of therapies, the ability to be empathic is being seen as the crucial ingredient in the therapeutic process. We would tend to see this as a matter of sympathy rather than empathy in that it is not a matter of feeling the same feelings as the client but of being able to feel with the client. However, whatever the words we use to describe it, what is meant is that the counselor is able to come to see what it is that the person

is trying to communicate and translates that communication, especially its affective elements, into clearer, more coherent conceptual form.

Thirdly, the point of the skills of counseling, especially the skill of responding to the client's self-communications, is to enable the person to get a more objective view of who they are and the way they feel about things and why they are doing the things they are doing so that they can develop a greater capacity for self-reflection and self-determination . Centrally the counselor seeks to learn the client and, in and through his learning of the client, responds in a way that enables the client to come to learn himself and so develop greater flexibility in his behavioral potentialities.

Understanding, not a technique.

We call this whole process the process of UNDERSTANDING. While it possesses similarities to the technique of what is known as reflective listening, we do not see it as quite the same. This is primarily because we make a distinction between a technique and a skill. Understanding is not a technique because in the first place, there is nothing covert about it, it is a genuine attempt on the part of one person to truly grasp what another is trying to convey and get to know the person in the area of his self disclosure. This is done not for 'the sake of something else' as a manipulative technique is, but for its own sake, as being of central value in and of itself. It is the means by which one learns the unique contours of the inner world of the other person. It implies a personal commitment to the other as being of value in their self-disclosure. This is a gift. But as a gift it can be perfected through training and practice, and so becomes a skill. The difference between a skill and a technique is that in the former the person is embodied in the action, in some way it is a real expression of who he or she is, whereas a technique, as we have said, has an impersonal quality to it, it is a tool used by the person and then laid aside once it has achieved its aim.

EMOTIONAL COMPONENTS OF THE LEARNING ENCOUNTER.

The student's personal investment.

To see why the skills of understanding are crucial to the learning process we have to return to what we originally said about learning: that, as we understand it, learning is persons. This sounds like something of a truism, but, like all truisms, unpacking it can teach us a lot that we seem to have forgotten. Learning is an encounter between two people, both of whom are invested in a particular view of life. The student comes to the classroom already invested in a view of himself and the world and in a complex set of behaviors and attitudes that he believes will best realise his fulfilment in life. He will have already formed a preliminary notion as to the value of the subject being taught and the role it is likely to play in his life. Depending on the particular subject, the student may already believe that he knows something of what it is about and hence is invested in a particular view as to its meaning and value to him. Any new

learning experience will challenge a person in these present self-investments, and, hence, will be intrinsically threatening. These dynamics need to be recognised and worked with by the teacher.

The teacher's personal investment.

On the other hand, teachers, too, are subject to a certain threat in the educational process. This stems from the fact that they have a personal investment in the teaching of their particular subject; it has personal meaning; it is bound up with their own understanding of themselves and the nature of the world in which they live. In presenting the material they are inevitably presenting themselves. Who they are then in and around their subject is being exposed to others and this self-disclosure is in itself productive of an intrinsic anxiety. If it is true that one learns to the extent that one becomes the teacher and is able to do what he or she does, then the student will only be able to personally invest in material if they see it already invested in by the teacher. In the teacher, then, it requires that their personal investment in the material be allowed to show through. This exposes the teacher to the possibility of rejection on the part of the students, not just the rejection of the ideas but the rejection of the teacher inasmuch as they are personally invested in those ideas. If the student, then, is to learn from the teacher they themselves will have to recognise the presence of this anxiety on the part of the teacher and relate to them accordingly.

Intrinsic defenses in the learning process.

There is then a fundamental anxiety involved in the process of education. It activates certain defense mechanisms in both student and teacher which have to be reckoned with if learning is to take place. They stem from the fact that the personal identity of both student and teacher is being challenged and this identity is essentially a matter of one's personal value system. Values are what bring a sense of unity into our striving; they identify who we are and how we see what is significant for our fulfilment. In that values govern our actions, -- what we are reaching for -- they are intrinsically bound up with emotions: emotions are aroused by the implicit meaning and significance that our experiencing has for us in terms of what we have discerned as necessary for our fulfilment and they move us towards achieving it. If, then, in the learning situation, the meanings and values which define a person's identity, are brought into question, as they inevitably will be, negative emotions of one sort or another will inevitably be aroused and, unless recognised and dealt with, will impede the learning process. These negative emotions are generated within both the student and the teacher, between the student and the teacher and between the students themselves.

Summary.

In that these can block the learning process, then, they need to be explicitly recognised and worked with by both student and teacher if that process is to be able to move forward. In dealing with them, then, we can draw upon the notions and skills used in

in the counseling setting. In particular we believe that the central skill of 'understanding' is relevant to the resolution of these barriers in both the student and the teacher since it was developed precisely to enable people to overcome anxiety and involve themselves in both the process of self-disclosure, the discovery of the meaning of their experiencing, and in the reorganisation of their value investments.

THE PRESENT SITUATION: TENSIONS BETWEEN SUBJECTIVITY AND OBJECTIVITY.

Knowledge and personal existence.

The absence in educational theory of the recognition of these dynamics and the failure to take them into account is centrally due to the fact that we have simply lost sight of the relationship of knowledge to the existential reality of the human person. The situation that seems to characterise us today seems to be one in which we see knowledge as somehow disembodied, existing out there independently of humanity. We have become enormously skilled at defining and catagorising things and organising concepts into systems: we are in fact renowned for the quality of our textbooks with their clear and systematic presentation of ideas and findings. However, what also seems to have happened is that we tend to see those ideas etc. as somehow independent of the people who produced them: we treat those catagories and definitions as if they were fixed entities, as simply reflections of independent realities.

What we seem to have forgotten is that the roots of definitions and categories actually lie in the experience of individuals, that they are abstractions from the world of personal experience and that their stability as definitions is a result of personal subjective decision: it is we choose who choose to define things in certain ways. As we would see it, there is no objective knowledge apart from the dynamic activity of people seeking to realise something of personal value. We do not confront reality then with a simple 'tabula rasa', a blank mind on which the world imprints itself, but from particular perspectives dictated by our needs. Clark writes: "What facts we discover depends on the questions, purposes and interests with which we actively confront the world...We look in vain for any building blocks which are given to all of us as the raw material of our experience." (The Need to Question. Prentice-Hall, 1973. P46.) There can be no objective knowledge, then, apart from the dynamic activity of persons seeking to actualise themselves towards their fulfillment. Even the most objective of the abstract disciplines, that of mathematics, is the result of subjective decision, particularly as to the status of its axioms. It is a creative tool for understanding our experience, not simply a highly abstract picture of reality 'out there'.

Objective knowledge and the community.

Furthermore, objective knowledge is objective not simply because it grasps something of the 'objective' world, but because, through interpersonal dialogue, groups of people have had to work together to create a common world within which to live. Indeed we

can say that systematised knowledge of our world fundementally gains its status as objective only insofar as it is accepted by a community as an accurate formulation of the way things are.

Without losing its roots in subjectivity, it moves through interpersonal dialogue to becoming less and less idiosyncratic and, inasfar as it becomes accepted by the wider community, it takes on an increasingly independent status, functioning as a taken-for-granted 'fact'. Poole puts it this way: "Objectivity is what is commonly received as objectively valid, all the attitudes, presuppositions, unquestioned assumptions typical of any given society. Objectivity implies the acceptance of the dominant social, ethical and religious views of that society. Objectivity is, for all practical purposes, the totality of what is taken to be the case. Objectivity is the totality of received opinion on what is acceptable/not acceptable, desirable/not desirable, good-/not good, etc. Objectivity in any given society in fact gets defined as the political and social status quo. ("Towards Deep Subjectivity." Penguin Books, London 1973 P45.)

This is not to decry the value of forming a common understanding of reality through the use of definitions, catagorisations or systematic formulation of knowledge. This is absolutely indispensible if we are to create a common world that has a certain stability and intelligibility. We cannot exist together without this; we are only able to function together as a community to the extent that we are able to overcome our idiosyncratic points of view and discover the commonalities that we share and so create a shared understanding of the world in which we live together. Concepts, in that they drop or leave behind the idiosyncratic elements of our personal experiencing, enable us to dialogue with others and so come to understand what it is that we share in common. Through this we come to understand who we are and what we are capable of achieving together.

The role of conceptualisation.

It is not, then, the process itself that is wrong, but from an educational point of view, the failure to recognise the source from which conceptualisations emerge, the world of personal experiencing. What has been forgotten is that they are abstractions from that experiencing. They are useful, indeed indispensible, but they have dropped something in the process, the living experiential world of the person. These abstractions are limited in their ability to reflect reality as it is in and of itself since reality is only seen from a historically bounded and situated perspective of the subject. The role of abstractions is not to give us a bird's eye view of reality, but to enable us to act meaningfully and fruitfully within it. Clarke describes the role of universals in this way: "The previous section showed that the questioner is limited to a variety of points of view through which he makes his way. But sheer particularity would be utter chaos. We make our way by dealing coherently with things, experimenting with various forms of order. This ordering is the universality which gives shape to our experience. If we ask what we mean by anything, we are asking what we can do with it, what part

it plays in an ordered way of life. Universals are not contents of the mind but are ways of acting consistently and repeatedly." (Clark. The Need to Question. Prentice-Hall; New Jersey 1973 P114.)

Through our conceptualisation of our experiencing, then, we seek to discover how we can operate consistently within the world and out of our discoveries we both discern something of the inherent structure of our world and in turn structure it further in meaningful ways, ie. ways which will enable us to protect, maintain and enhance our lives and so achieve some measure of fulfilment. Insofar as we are able to share our conceptualisations with others we are able to create a common framework of reference with regards to our world and participate with others in the task of realising common aims and purposes. What we take as objective fact is only such inasfar as it is agreed upon as being so by a group of individuals and enables them to function together in meaningful and significant ways. Objectivity, then, is not something that belongs primarily to the concepts themselves but is something that in the first place belongs to the people who devise and use them. It is a function of their dynamic activity of discovering something of value for their fulfilment both idiosycratically and as a community.

The notion of values, then, is intrinsic to any search for and interpretation of facts: there are no facts apart from an evaluative process of interpretation. What is discerned as a fact is only so within a particular set of meanings agreed upon by the collective body of researchers or the community at large. Inasfar as these meanings become accepted by society at large, they become the-taken-for-granted basis for common sense as to what is real and what is not, what is good and what bad. As Ryschlak puts it: "Commonsense refers to the agreed upon or accepted knowledge of a group, knowledge which is reflected in its culture and is no longer as source of contention among its members." (Introduction to Personality and Psychotherapy. Houghton Mifflin 1973. P15.)

Education and communal objectivity.

Education, then, is centrally concerned with passing on this communal objectivity to others; we seek to introduce them to the knowledge that has been gleaned through the intersubjective process of understanding who we are, what sort of world we live in and how we might fruitfully relate to it to realise our fulfilment both as individuals and as a community. With children it is enough that we pass on the knowledge as objective "the way things are". With adolescents and adults, however, the fact that all objective knowledge is subjectively based is a factor which has to be more explicitly taken into account. The reason for this is that growth into adolescence and early adulthood, in that it involves the development of a new level of self-reflexivity, also involves the capacity to come to a point of view of their own. As we would put it, part of the definition of an adult seems to include the sense of being a KNOWER, ie. one who has a point of view as to the overal meaning and nature of things. It emerges explicitly in that growth stage and, unless this factor is expl-

icitly taken into account in the educational process, we are in danger of losing our understanding of the actual nature of the learning process and the dynamics that are involved in it.

The intersubjective nature of objectivity: a challenge.

We are, in fact, today, being brought up rather sharply against this notion that all objective knowledge is the knowledge of persons in dialogue, together with all the value assumptions that that involves. Recently in my own city of Milwaukee we have gone through a battle that is afflicting many different parts of the country: the battle over the content of textbooks to be used by children, particularly at the grade and high school levels. Certain groups have been offended by either the scientific notion of evolution as an objective description of the development of humanity, or over the inclusion of certain data with regards to sexuality. Without wanting to enter into the debate over these issues, the difficulty that this textbook issue raises, whether the proponents of it know it or not, is the very fundamental question as to the nature of 'objective' knowledge. What is objective knowledge? Is there such a thing as a body of truths out there, so to speak, which everyone simply has to accept as factual and indisputable? What the opponents of current textbooks seem to be saying is that there are alternative ways of viewing the facts: the 'objective' truth is not simply what the scientists are telling us. What they are saying is that other interpretations are possible and should be included in textbooks which provide children with a knowledge of the world. Whether it is their intention or not what these opponents of 'the scientific objectivity' are bringing to the fore is that the answer to the question 'what is man'?, is not just a matter of facts but of interpretation. As Ryschlak says: "Those who feel that the question can be answered factually, by conducting empirical investigations, overlook the consideration that 'facts' demand meaningful explanation; and it is in this realm that a variety of answers is possible." (op. cit.P1.)

From dualism to relativism.

I do not know the general age-bracket of the parents that are objecting but there was a period in our history in the universities when this understanding of knowledge as the production of people from within a personal and social historically bounded framework began to make itself known on our university campuses. Perry in the sixties studied the ways in which examinations were phrased and found a distinct movement from what he termed dualistic thinking about knowledge to relativistic thinking. Lombard reported on Perry's finding in an article entitled "Relativism in Organisations." He writes: "Perry infers from these changes in examination questions that professors' assumptions about knowledge and standards for knowledge have changed. Fifty years ago the questions showed that professors viewed knowledge as structured in ways that led to essentially simple, two-valued, right or wrong answers to questions and problems. Today's examinations show that professors hold knowledge to be relative, not absolute; not meaningful except in the context of the ideas-system, times and circumstances in which it way generated. Perry labels

the first orientation "dualistic" the second "relativistic". He calls the change revolutionary because it means that the professors' views of knowledge as a source of authority do change." (Lombard. Relativism in Organisations. In "Interpersonal Behavior". Athos and Gabarro Prentice-Hall. 1978. P158.)

Dualistic thinking.

Despite the change in the thinking in universities and colleges, as Lombard also says, in the general world of business and politics, and as a background cultural perspective, it is dualistic thinking that in fact still dominates. The textbook debate is at root a dualistic battle: there is an opposition of one objectivity versis another objectivity.

I call this mode of dualistic knowing objectivist. Objectivist thinking sees knowledge in a sort of mirror like way: concepts actually reflect the world out there. There is a body of truth that actually gives us a clear and coherent picture of the way reality actually is; growth in knowledge is simply a matter of adding on to that body of knowledge so that it gets bigger and more comprehensive. From this perspective education is the process whereby we simply pass on this information to children or to adults, the mains skills for doing this are the skills of clear, coherent, preferably graphic presentation and a discovery of the motivational and intellectual barriers that might exist within the person that prevent the understanding and retention of this body of data.

Multiplicity thinking.

In terms of the textbook controversy, however, because of our democratic system, this dualistic battle is proposed in relativistic terms, ie. that there are alternative explanations which demand equal representation. Where in fact this frame of reference is taken seriously and lived out, it results in what Perry calls multiplicity thinking.

Multipicity thinking I would call subjectivist thinking. It emphasises the fact that there are as many understandings of the world as there are people in it and, taken as a program of action, it defends the right to a personal point of view, that the way people view things has validity for them, while it may not have validity for others. Roger's of course had a major impact on this sort of approach. Essentially it comes out of an implicit protest against the sort of strait-jacket that dualistic thinking puts on the human spirit in its creative growth and development, the bringing forth of new and as yet unthought of potentialities. He wrote recently: "I and many others, have come to a new realisation. It is this: the only reality I can possibly know is the world as I perceive and experience it at this moment. And the only reality you can possibly know is the world as you perceive and experience it at this moment. And that the only certainty is that those perceived realities are different. There are as many real worlds as there are people! This creates a most burdomsome dilemna, one never before experienced in history." (A way of Being. Houghton Mifflin, Boston 1980 P102.)

Multiplicity thinking, however, also has deep roots in our culture, deriving essentially from the idea that religious beliefs are a private matter, and that everyone has a right to religious freedom, ie. live out of any ultimate understanding of reality that they believe in as long as it does not infringe on the rights of others to do the same. As a program of action, it can be encapsulated in the phrase, 'everyone has the right to their understanding of the world in which they live.' It looks primarily to the protection of personal space to live out of one's own perspectives without challenge or query from other people. It looks then to privacy, to the authority of inner experience and the right to the freedom to create one's own lifestyle based on personal convictions that might differ from others.

Insofar as it is used to underpin the values inherent in our notion of democracy, it undoubtedly has validity. However, if it is taken as a statement about the objective validity of those points of view and of what education is about, then it is radically deficient. There can be no idiosyncratic point of view apart from the community in which we are brought up. In the very language we imbibe in our socialisation process we are introduced into a way of viewing the world of experience, its meaning and its values. For someone to fully enter into and participate in the life of the community necessarily entails that they learn about the objective world in and through the understanding of the community within which they exist. Without this they are simply left with their idiosyncratic point of view and locked into the limitations of their subjectivity. In that humanistic psychology, which developed and promoted the value of idiosyncratic subjectivity, has also had a large impact on education, it resulted in simply providing an environment in which the student could learn what they felt was most important to them and at the pace they desired. It resulted in a sort of 'hands off the individual' type of approach: they know best what they need to know and how to learn it. If you give them the freedom to do that, they will learn what is necessary and valid for them. The results, however, have not been encouraging. It seems to have produced mass ignorance and superficiality rather than growthful learning.

It has also, I believe, produced an over-emphasis again on dualistic thinking. The reason for this is, I think, that the subjectivist approach fails to avert to the fact that of necessity we have to live in a common world with others and be able to dialogue with them in order to structure and maintain a common world of meanings and values. There are certain implications involved in this which are simply ignored by the subjectivist approach. Roger's himself, in the article just quoted, simply takes for granted the possibility of dialogue with others through the use of concepts which are capable of being understood by others: he simply assumes the on-going existence of a shared world of meanings and values which enable us to use words to describe our idiosyncratic world in a way which will be understood by others.

The possiblity of dialogue indicates that we essentially share a common nature with others, that there is an objective, common structure to human reality that needs to be acknowledged and respected. Heidegger made the point that communication itself in order to take place at all assumes an a priori unity between the disparate, particular elements, that there is a structure to reality that renders it 'objective', something that has to be discovered and worked with. We can only build up community insofar as together we are able to discern dimensions of that objective structure and can come to an understanding of and bring to realisation a common world of meanings and values within which we can function together.

Our common life together, then, demands that we find ways of articulating and deciding upon an understanding of the structure of our common humanity in order to maintain our lives together as individual beings. If that community element is threatened by idiosyncratic purposes and desires, then, as a community, we will tend to retreat to the imposition of some objective framework of meaning and values. Both as individuals and as a community we simply cannot tolerate too much chaos: we need a certain stability and consistency in our world in order to function effectively. We will be forced, then, to retreat to dualistic thinking simply to hold ourselves together as a community, and this seems to be what is happening at the moment. The turbulance of change over the last few years and increased demands for the freedom to live according to idiosyncratic understandings and desires has resulted in a retreat backwards to the imposition of 'traditional' objectivities. As groups and societies have seen their common worlds collapsing, there has been a very often violent attempt to expel new ideas and reimpose 'traditional' meanings and values. I think that the protests and antagonisms against American cultural, business and political influence in the Middle East and other parts of the world is to some extent due to the fact that its influence has disturbed the traditional notions as regards to the nature of life and the values that are important for the realisation of human fulfilment, leaving peoples adift in a world that lacks stable meanings and values.

Relativistic thinking.

However, such a retreat does not seem ultimately to be the answer. What is needed is a way of realising both dimensions; both the need through dialogue for the discovery and articulation of the objective structures involved in our reality and also an acknowledgement of the subjective basis of the objective knowledge that we formulate. It is this sort of way of thinking which Perry calls relativism. The word itself is somewhat unfortunate in that it can be confused with multiplicity, the radical belief that everything is relative. But this is not what he means by the term. He would see as a stage that incorporates the dimensions of both objectivity and subjectivity. Lombard explains what the relativistic mentality would look like in these words: "At the stage of relativism a student is aware of the internal structure of his views, and he has a capacity to examine hitherto unstated

basic assumptions in his thinking and thus to change them (and his behavior). Not only does he perceive the same events differently from the way he did earlier, but he can also percieve the same events from different perspectives. Thus he has choices in respect to his actions with others that he did not have at the stage of multiplicity...Thus Perry classifies as being at the state of relativism a student who elects to conduct his life by absolute values, after considering alternatives, recognising the limits of his own situation with its particular purposes, times, circumstances, and systems of ideas, and understanding that others may live equally intelligently by values different from his." (op.cit P160.)

THE CHALLENGE TO EDUCATION.

The movement towards this stage of growth is being forced upon us today by the very structure of human reality. If we are to survive, we have to move towards the creation of individuals and communities who are both able to STAND-FOR a set of meanings and values which they have discerned as valuable ways of realising their positive potentialities as human beings and yet capable of UNDER-STANDING differing points of view and capable of learning and changing through them, but in their own unique ways, ways they can personally invest in and own. If we are to survive at all as a race, this must be achieved on the international scale between nations, between groups within societies and between individuals within groups. And central to bringing this about is the educational system itself. Learning is at the heart of this growth process, whether that be within the individual in self-learning, between individuals on an interpersonal basis, between groups within societies or between societies themselves.

A new kind of education.

As we would see it, then, it is this level of growth in inner stability, external flexibility and the capacity to both stand-for something and yet be open to understanding others and able to change in accordance with what one learns that we believe characterises the true learner. It is part of the educational process itself for the teacher to enable this level of growth to emerge. In one way this is calling for a different type of teacher, though one which really makes explicit what we all know a good teacher to be: it is one who is both able to hold to the necessary structure needed to pass on the requisite knowledge and yet be able to recognise and operate within the fact that that knowledge is only present in and through their limited subjectivity and can only be learned insofar as other subjects, with their own emotional-intellectual uniqueness, are able to invest in it. On the one hand, then, the teacher needs to be willing and able to stand for the objective knowledge that he possesses: the student is there to learn what that is. Yet in that giving of the 'objective' knowledge of the teacher, the individuality of the students, their ability to relate it to their unique idiosyncratic world of personal experiencing must be allowed for and encouraged.The teacher needs to be able to recognise the dynamics operating here and work with them, structuring the class to take

account of them.

On the other hand, it also calls for a different way of learning on the part of the student. The student needs to leave behind their unique idiosyncratic world and open him or herself to the objective knowledge of the teacher, recognising that he or she can only enter into that objective knowledge through the unique subjectivity of the teacher and yet be willing to refer that 'objective' knowledge to who they are as unique individuals and contribute that to the class through the way they respond to the teacher.

The work of Charles A. Curran.

The reason Charles. A. Curran's work is so important is that he really did take relativism, as we have strictly defined it, seriously and tried to work out its implications for the educational process. In that he saw education as being the introduction of the student into the objective knowledge of the community, he emphasised that the classroom situation is not and cannot be simply a laissez-faire doing of one's own thing. There is an intrinsic structure and discipline to the learning situation that has to be respected. In the first place, the student is there to learn from the teacher. Around the area of concern, then, it is not a meeting of equels. Wherever one person is in the situation of teaching another, this fundamental inequality is present and has to be recognised: one or the other is there to learn something new. In terms of the knowledge involved it is inherently a superiority/inferiority situation. In that it is new, it will inevitably challenge who they are and what they know at the present moment and demand a change in their self-structure. A certain level of threat, then, is implicit in the situation.

Secondly, this structure and discipline and the threat element are embodied in a personal relationship: the educational process is an encounter between individual persons, each with their own unique complexes of meanings and values. The objective knowledge that the teacher conveys and stands for is the objective knowledge as embodied in him as a unique individual; he or she is invested in it, it has been filtered through that individuality and is part of the person of the teacher. Whether learning is done through a face to face encounter, or through the reading of books and articles, one can only come to know the subject through another person. Intrinsic in the capacity to relate to the concepts then is the ability to relate to another person. On the other hand, for the objective knowledge to be really learned by the student it needs to be capable of being understood by the student in his or her unique self-investments; the meanings and values that the student brings to the classroom will dictate the extent and the difficulty that they have in actually introjecting the new objective material being presented. The way in which the material is presented therefore will have a major influence on how easy or difficult it will be to get an experiential feel for that knowledge. It needs then to be presented in such a way that the student is able to see through the teacher, so to speak, and enter into the material itself; the point is not to stop at the

teacher but be able through the teacher to reach the material itself and though engagement with the material filter it through his own unique subjectivity and so see its meaning for him in his unique experiential world.

As far as we know, this way of viewing the educational process is rather unique. Although relativism made its presence known in the universities in the sixties, it does not seem to have lasted or have been worked out in any practical way. Largely it would seem that it reached the level of multiplicity and then retreated backwards since then. Kolb gives us a clue to the reasons for this in his work. He relates the dominance of what he calls abstract conceptualisation to two major factors that occured at much the same time in the early sixties: the Russian success in putting a vehicle into space and the subsequent diverting of major funds into the work of catching up and putting a man on the moon, which meant primarily the emphasis on developing mathematical and technological knowledge and skills; and the advent in this country through the work of Bruner of the thinking of Piaget which proposed that the abstractive-intellectual capabilities that emerged in adolescence were the high point of human faculty development. It emerged last and therefore was the highest of the faculties. Both trends led to a heavy emphasis on the primacy of the abstractive capacities in the search for truth, or at least the most important truths. (see Experiential Learning. Prentice-Hall, P13.)

BACKGROUND TO PRESENT EDUCATIONAL THINKING:

The Cartesian/Newtonian paradigm.

This emphasis on abstract conceptualisation, however, melded well with a general intellectual framework that has dominated our thinking for the last few centuries: what is known as the Cartesian-Newtonian paradigm. In this it is proposed that the world and its functioning can best be understood as vast and intricate mechanism whose basic parts and the interrelationships between them could be clearly worked out, systematised into coherent and consistent conceptual patterns on the model of mathematics. Basically we were led to believe that reality was totally rational in the classical, mathematical sense; it could, therefore, eventually be totally 'figured- out' both as to what it was and what it could be. Possession of this knowledge would enable us to bring nature completely under conscious, rational control and give us the capacity to systematically direct it to the satisfaction of human purposes, providing we could devise the appropriate technology.

This perspective is deeply embedded in our cultural environment and intellectual environment. It is still very dominant, for instance in both counseling and educational psychology, especially in the belief that it is possible to get a clear and systematic view of the structure of human reality, discern the causal connections that underpin the behavioral dynamics involved, and discover the right techniques for correcting deficiencies and enhancing proficiency.

To have a clear set of concepts organised logically and coherently into a holistic and consistent pattern is seen, then, as being a mirror of the way things are in the world: a concept equals a thing or a relationship or event out there in the world. Descarte actually believed, and many others have followed him in this, that it should be possible to devise a language in which one word stood for one thing.

We can see evidence of this way of viewing words and concepts at the present moment on the political front. The current battle over aid to the contras in Nicaragua is very much a battle over words: we stand against terrorism but we are for freedom fighters. Terrorism equals one thing, freedom fighter another. However, whenever we get this attempt to restrict one meaning to one word we are involved in a power struggle: whose definition is to hold sway? The war of words in Washington at the moment is precisely this: a power struggle as to who is going to get to define the content of the words terrorist and freedom fighter, one side would see the contras as terrorists the other as freedom fighters. On the wider front we have the core battle between the Soviet Union and ourselves over the content of the word 'democratic'.

Whenever, out of this sense that a concept means one thing out there in the objective world, I wish to restrict the meaning of a word to my meaning, then I will be in conflict with you who might want to give it a somewhat different meaning. The only way that we can then share in a common world of meaning is by a submission on your part of the meanings I have decided the words should have, or vice-versa.

School-counseling and the Cartesian paradigm.

Where we view then intellectual constructs as mirroring actual reality out there, then growth through education is a matter of transfering this picture whole and entire into the other's head. The other ought to be able to see exactly the same thing as I do. All the person has to do to make it operational is to put his mind and will to work and do it. If he cannot, then there is something wrong with the person's intellectual or voluntary functions and he is sick and in need of help. Then we send him to the school counselor. In this emphasis on the factual and intellectual aspect of knowledge we have then divorced it from the emotional and evaluative side of human being, seeing them as belonging to two different spheres instead of part of one unitary process.

Generally I think it is still true that this is mainly how we see the relationship between the school counselor and the educational process. We tend to divorce them, seeing emotional and social problems as something outside of the learning process itself and so to be dealt with outside. This is not to say that emotional problems stemming from sources external to the learning process cannot and do not interfere with learning, of course they

do, and, as such, should be dealt with outside the classroom setting. What I am refering to is the fact that emotional life and intellectual life have tended to be separated and compartmentalised. Although attempts have been made of late to overcome this dicotomy it still remains a strong educational influence. This too is the result of the Cartesian framework out of which we have been unconsciously operating for so long: the division between mental life and bodily reality. The radical seperation that Descarte introduced between these two dimensions of human reality continues to plague us today. Kant added to the division by locating the core of morality entirely in the emotional dimensions of man, in a sort of in-built moral sense. The result has been that we have seen objectivity as essentially belonging to the head and to the discovery of clear and consistent concepts as being a mirror of the lawfully regulated world outside, and values as somehow entirely subjective, located in the inner emotional dimension. If the student was able to regurgitate these ideas then it was considered that the material had been learned; it was essentially unrelated to his value system. One major result of this which is increasingly becoming of concern to us is that while many people have achieved a high level of cognitive knowledge, their level of morality is very low. Many thinkers today are concerned that we do not possess the moral maturity to use the knowledge that we have wisely and so will bring destruction down upon ourselves.

Sociological results of this paradigm.

One result of this generally is that we have tended to produce people who are only comfortable and secure within a dualistic framework. Perhaps it might be better to say that dualistic thinking tends to lock us into a rather childish level of growth. It is a natural part of the maturational process to go through the stage of dualistic thinking, and even multiplicity thinking. However, while the inexorable historical process is towards the relativistic way of being, we are still educating people who have an exaggerated need to live in a world which has a objective fixed meaning and content: our philosophical view has generated people who only feel secure in a world which is conceptually clear and fixed, one in which we can operate with certainty and efficiency. Whatever that world is we look to establish its boundaries and concepts and fix it as objective.

We see this reflected, I think, on the current social and political scene, where at the moment there seems a universal tendency towards a conservative perspective which wants to freeze what is seen as the traditional status quo into the dominant taken-for-granted way of looking at things. It has been observed that college campuses are no longer the hot beds of revolt that they were in the sixties, that young people are no longer very interested in political protest or intellectual ferment. They are mainly concerned with making their way in the world, of creating a satisfying personal material and emotional life-style for themselves. In that the dualistic mentality dominates there, they have returned to the dualistic mentality of the past and are on the whole far more conservative than the previous generation.

This is true not only here but in Europe too, and on the religious front as well as in the social and political spheres. Under the impact of enormous challenges to change, societies and groups are retreating from the drastic revision of the norms of objective knowledge and value and militantly reemphasising their own understanding of 'objective truth'. I remember a character in the movie "Silkwood" crying out to the heroine: "Don't give me questions that I cannot answer." Many people today, and one finds this with students, find it difficult to live with ambiguity, with uncertainty, they want a world they can clearly understand and whose questions they can answer: a totally objective world of fixed and stable meanings reference to which will answer the questions that they meet. The result is a certain rigidity in thinking patterns and an underlying emotional insecurity -- since life itself is incapable of unambiguous conceptualisation -- and a corresponding incapacity to flow with and learn from experience which is always in a state of constant flux.

The emergence of a new paradigm.

However, the insight that was captured in the notion of relativism has not itself died. The fundamental insight that all knowledge is knowledge of subjects with all the limitations on objectivity that that carries with it, is slowly but surely making itself known again. It was a valid insight and as such once gained can never be entirely lost again. It touched a realm of human experience that we are all aware of in one way or another but tend not to avert to. However, sociologically, because of our world-wide system of communication, we are being forced to reckon with the fact that there are a multiplicity of views as to the objective meaning of the world and the core values that are most humanly fulfilling. It has left us with no place to hide, so to speak. We can no longer simply close ourselves off from the realisation that others are as deeply convinced about the objectivity of their perspectives as we are of our own. We may be puzzled about it but we are being forced to acknowledge it.

We can no longer then simply close ourselves off from the fact that all of our 'objective' knowledge is the creation of historically conditioned subjects and is intrinsically limited by that fact. It is like an insight in counseling: the discovery of a personal meaning that under the pressure of circumstances we are somehow becoming increasingly aware of but do not quite have the courage to put into words. However, once it has made its presence known experientially it can never really be put back again and will, if important enough, continue to work its way through the system so to speak. The intensity of the protest against it, I think, is a measure of the core validity of the insight and the far-reaching changes that it demands. People are not frightenned about something unless it has a significant impact upon who they define themselves to be and their understanding of the nature of the world in which they live. As Combs, Richards and Richards point out, in order to function well and with a measure of freedom, our self/other concept needs to have a core stability and consistency which persists amid change.

Where this is threatened by an new experience or stimuli, the first reaction is self-defense.

Although the notion itself has deep philosophical roots in our culture, as an experiential insight for our world it was first articulated in science itself at the beginning of this century in the work of the great atomic physicists, Heisenburg and his colleagues. It found expression in what is known as the Copenhagen Conference in 1927. Its implications were so revolutionary to our Cartesian/Newtonian view of the world that it has taken a long time being accepted even in science. Its implications for other fields of knowledge are only just now becoming apparent. Recently a whole edition of the Journal of the A.A.C.D. was devoted to touching on some of its implications for counseling. Psychology itself, it is being increasingly recognised, has its fundamental basis in the old Cartesian/Newtonian paradigm, and as such is quite inadequate. Today, then, we are being challenged to look at the assumptions out of which we have been operating and see what the implications are for these scientific findings.

Perhaps the person who has done most to bring this to popular awareness, and by popular I do not mean superficial, has been Fritjof Capra. I am refering specifically to his book "The Turning Point." (Bantom Books New York 1983.) In that work he has clearly outlined the unconscious presuppositions of the Cartesian-Newtonian framework and shown how it has permeated all our thinking: It has resulted in two main beliefs that underline the basic model or paradigm that we unconsciously operate out of. The first is, as we have said, that reality can be 'figured out', that it is possible to attain a conceptual picture of the whole, understand the mechanisms operating there fully, and enable us to manipulate it effectively. Put in a different way, we have been led to believe that we can discover the definitive 'answer' to the problem of human reality and the solutions which will enable us to achieve fulfilment. The second belief is that it is possible to look at reality in segmented ways in such a way that we can treat those areas as complete and independent wholes. Growth in knowledge is seen then as fitting together the various pieces of exact knowledge in much the same way as we fit together the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle and so eventually come up with an exact picture of the whole. It is basically a matter of adding on new pieces of information.

However, with the advent of quantum mechanics, we are realising that this is not the way things are. We are in fact inherently incapable of gaining a picture of the meaning of the whole. Not even mathematics can give us a picture of reality as it is in and of itself. In fact the human person as a subject is intrinsically part of the process of constructing the pictures of reality: the reality we know is not simply reality as it is in and of itself but only reality as seen from a particular human point of view, constructed according to human purposes and wishes. We literally see what it is we want to see. Orenstein points this up when he writes: "How many of us realisé....that our ordinary world, our ordinary consciousness, is a restricted, selective

construction? Our consciousness does not completely reflect an external reality, but only a minor sample of the flux of potential experiences. We create our personal worlds in three major ways: by our biological design, by our shared cultural heritage, and by our daily choices." (The Mind-field. The Octogon Press. London. 1983. P15.)

The values that we live by, coming out of our biological structure, our cultural environment and our personal perspectives on what is desirable and what is not ,are, then, operative in any search for knowledge. We conceptualise in order to achieve certain human purposes. Hence Clarke says: "Symbolic worlds are forms of 'meaning', and these are possibilities of acting, ways of expressing and finding ourselves. Now it is only through my body that I can 'externalise' and 'recollect' myself. Indeed to express myself is to exist materially or bodily... Even the most abstract forms of scientific or artistic or religious symbolism are extensions of the possibility of bodily activity. All mental 'grasping' is derivitive of the first clutching movements by which the infant questions and tries to make sense of his world... Our original symbolic world is practical and in the first person. It is from this source that we gradually build up the world of meaning for a spectator." (Op.cit. P129-30.)

We are, then, participant/observers of our reality not simply detached/ observers. The body of objective knowledge that we build up is the result of the interpersonal dialogue that goes on amongst us as to the meaning of our common experience. Inasfar as it is accepted by the culture at large it forms the corpus of teaching that we pass on in education. The various forms of symbolic worlds that we build constitute the various disciplines of knowledge. The methods of questioning will depend on the area we are investigating. None of the conceptual frameworks that we come up with, however, have any absolute status; none exactly mirror reality; all are relative to a point of view and a set of human purposes; of their nature they are ambiguous, they both reveal reality to us and enable us to make our way, at the same time they hide reality from us, cutting out other possible ways of seeing things and structuring reality. We have to choose a form in order to grow and develop but every choice is a corresponding restriction of the potentialities for growth. We are in need of a structured meaningful world in order to feel secure enough to risk investment but every investment alters the world in which we live and requires a revision of our conceptualisations.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE LEARNING PROCESS.

Intersubjective nature of objective knowledge.

In our emphasis on abstract intellectual knowledge, then, we have forgotten that it is rooted in our subjectivity and interpersonal dialogue. Teachers themselves have been encouraged in fact to hide that intersubjective nature and the personal investment that it carries with it --to hide the fact that they are personally the medium through which the student is able to enter that realm of communal discourse and so become part of its ongoing task of realising its potential and that no matter how

'objective' they try to be it will be imbued with their subjectivity. In this they are simply part of a larger trend which attempts to hide that intrinsic subjectivity under the cloak of objectivity: to present simply abstract concepts or agreed on facts as though they were disembodied data, existing out there in the world independent of any particular person.

As we would see it, the core of the deficiency in our educational system today is that it does not take into account that learning is essentially a process of coming to share in a common world with another person. Language learning is a prime example of this. There is no absolute body of data out there called a language. There is only a group of people who are able to communicate together through a common medium of symbols. Although there is a definite grammar and syntax involved in the way in which these symbols are used meaningfully, a syntax that basically is shared by all languages and makes possible the translation of one into another, the symbols themselves to be understood cannot be separated from their roots as a way of enabling a group of individuals to communicate with one another. One learns a language then only to the extent that it enables you to likewise become part of that group and participate in personal communication with it. Knowledge of the grammar is indispensible for the full grasp of the language as a language but it is of value only as an adjunct to communication with others.

The same is true of any discipline: conceptualisation in any field is an attempt to discover and articulate the grammar of the area under discussion. Insofar as we can discover the grammar we discover the structure that ties the particulars of our experience together and so enables us to function with greater efficiency within it. However, the grammar has no meaning apart from the living reality, the capacity to communicate with others around the area of concern and participate in a common task. Grammer reveals the inner structure of things, the facts so to speak, and in doing so it enables us to discern more clearly what it is we are able to do with and in a particular area: but the living reality is more that its grammar, it includes its purpose, its reason for being and its significance. It is a matter of discovering not only what we can do with it but also why.

Education, then, needs to be concerned not just with the grammar of various areas of study, but with the living reality of what it is we are studying and it gains its living reality essentially from the part it plays in human purposes, our living reality. Beyond the need for facts then we also need some experiential feel of the importance of the area in question to us as living, striving, suffering, relating human beings. We need to learn not just the grammar of history, but what it means to be a historian, what it does for us in terms of our human growth and development; not just the grammar of mathematics, but what it means to be a mathematician and how that enhances human life; and the locus of that experience is the person of the teacher.

Some years ago, Aldous Huxley said that one of the main diffic-

ulties with education was that its various disciplines had become segmented and isolated. He called them 'celibate disciplines' in that their isolation from one another meant that ultimately they became sterile, retreating into themselves and producing more and more about less and less and becoming simply irrelevant to the 'enjoying and suffering human beings'. They no longer served as ways of participating in a common human task but had become ends in themselves. It was felt that to discover more and more about less and less was somehow valuable in an of itself. This was one of the major consequences of the Cartesian/Newtonian paradigm: you could divide reality up and study the parts independently from the whole and the bits and pieces that we discovered would add on to the store of human knowledge. From this perspective, it made sense to work in isolation, chipping out, so to speak, more and more bits of data. The result is that today we have, because of our superior storage systems, computors etc. vasts amounts of data that will probably never be used, especially if human interest reorient themselves in other directions.

However, we now are beginning to realise that studying ever more restricted areas of particular phenomena does not in fact yield a deeper understanding of that phenomena. The new paradigm suggests that the parts themselves cannot be truly understood independently from the whole, that the whole itself has a major influence on the way the parts operate: cells specialise in order to enable the whole to function as an integrated whole, hence, the parts can only be really understood from within a knowledge of the organism as a whole. The great brain researcher, Sperry, who was responsible for the discovery of the split brain phenomenon has said of the nature of the brain: "The key realisation was that the higher levels of brain activity controls the lower. The higher cerebral properties of mind and consciousness are in command. They envelope, carry and overwhelm the physiochemical details. They call the plays, exerting downward control over the march of the nerve-impulse traffic. Our new model, mentalism, puts the mind and mental properties to work and gives them a reason for being and for having evolved in a physical system..... according to our new views of consciousness, ethical and moral values become a very legitimate part of brain science. They are no longer conceived to be reducible to brain physiology. Instead, we now see that subjective values exert powerful causal influences in brain function and research." (Interview. Omni Mag.) In brain studies then the individual parts gain their essential meaning from the place in the whole, they are formed and molded by their participation in the communal activity of maintaining and enhancing the integrity of the organism and will be radically affected by the way in which that integrity is perceived.

The same is true, analogically, in the realm of specialised educational disciplines. These ultimately only have meaning from within the values and purposes of the community. The primary whole, the living reality, that we have to deal with is the human community in their purposeful activity of seeking to realise something of value. What the community is attempting to achieve, its vision of what is ideal and significant will dictate the

nature of the academic disciplines that it generates; as those interests change so do the disciplines. To engage in the learning of any discipline then is to be introduced into the values of the community and enabled to participate in that communal quest which flows from them.

Learning: the participation in a communal task.

What had been lost, then, is the objective fact that all knowledge is the attempt of human beings to make sense of their lives; that they look at life in various ways in order to bring some sort of cognitive ordering into their experiencing in order to be able to act fruitfully within it, ie. in ways that would realise their fulfilment. And, in relating in these ways to reality, they are actually in the process of creatively forming and molding the world in which they live. To educate then is to introduce the student into a participation in that creative process and gives the discipline necessary to this process personal relevance. However, we cannot expect a personal investment on the part of students, the ability to incorporate the material into a personal set of meanings, if the teacher himself is not willing to acknowledge that he or she is personally invested in it as being of personal existential importance as an 'enjoying and suffering human being', as Huxley put it and that the 'obejctive' material bears the imprint of his subjectivity.

This is not just a matter of cognitive explanation, a looking at the material from within certain existential questions, as Huxley proposed, but a matter of personal experiencing. The only place that that is conveyed to the student is through the teacher's personal investment in the material. Curran says that in abstractive teaching, teaching that simply stays at the level of objective abstractions there is simply nothing for the student to invest in. They will not gain any sense that it is personally relevant to them as enjoying suffering human beings. The best teachers, therefore, are those who show that they personally are invested in the material they are teaching and hence are vulnerable to rejection of who they are in their teaching. Teacher vulnerability is essential to the capacity on the part of the student to actually invest in the material.

Genuine encounter of persons: teacher vulnerability.

The notion of the teacher as being vulnerable is undoubtedly a surprising thing to say and we need to understand precisely how it is meant. Normally, operating out of the Cartesian/Newtonian framework, we view the teacher as the one in the power position, and in many ways this is valid: presumably the teacher does know the subject matter better than the students, otherwise they would not normally be the teacher. It has been rightly said that knowledge is power, knowledge of a particular area gives us power and competence in that area and does render us superior to those who do not know. In a primitive sort of way, then, we can say that psychologically it renders the teacher somewhat God-like. Any teacher, then, will appear to the student with something of this god-like quality about them. However, this has become very much exaggerated for us today, given the pervasive influence of the

Cartesian/Newtonian perspective; our notion of 'expert', for instance, carries with it a sense of total mastery over a particular area such that he can clearly outline its interconnections and operate efficiently with them.

This exaggerated projection of god-likeness onto the teacher is shown in the belief that no matter what the teacher does he has some hidden and carefully thought out reason for whatever he does in the classroom. Because of this projection, they expect the teacher to be in full control of what is going on. If he does something that seems incongruous in some way, even in the sense of making an obvious mistake or contradiction in what he is saying, there is the belief that he is doing it for some hidden reason; it is part of his teaching technique. Since he is seen as being in masterly control of all the dynamics that are going on, the students' first response is to try to 'figure him out". If they cannot, they get anxious and fearful, wanting to cooperate yet not sure of how to do it and angry about what is going on.

In this sort of God-likeness, then, the teacher or any expert can become an instant threat to those who feel vulnerable in their ignorance. If, as we have said, intrinsic to being an adult, to the adult self-image, is the sense of being a knower and therefore essentially equel in dignity to other adults, then the God-like position of the teacher has the power to reveal one's not-yet-adulthood. We are threatened with exposure and with the experience of shame, of not being ideal in some way, of still being children. This is clearly evident to us in our experience of teaching languages. Language teaching was chosen by Curran primarily because it gives a clear learning process: ignorance at one end and knowledge and operational competancy at the other. What he discovered was that the students were primitively afraid of the language expert because he had the power to demean. As such they tended to hold the expert as a person at a distance and the experts themselves reported feeling isolated from the group. Being an expert, then, can evoke an intrinsic resistence in the learner to what they have to offer. Only when the expert revealed his own vulnerability by joining the group as a learner in a language he did not know, did he gain acceptance.

However, from the angle of acknowledging that what the teacher has has real personal importance to him, we can see that his very self-investment in the subject or ideas renders him vulnerable to others. In that he wishes to teach and share what he has we can say that the teacher is 'sick to teach'. He needs pupils, someone who will validate him in and around his area of expertise, otherwise he remains somewhat isolated and without value in his ideas. It is the personal investment of the teacher in his material that renders him vulnerable to rejection.

The teacher, then, is embodied into a set of personal self-investments; he is revealing himself and will be able to do so to the extent that he is existing in a trusting secure environment in which he will be treated with respect and enabled to get out of himself what it is that that he knows. There was a few years

ago a psycholgical experiment on the effects student attitudes have on a teacher. It was found that the ebb and flow of the spontaneity of the professor was radically dependent on attitudes of the class towards him. The teacher has certain anxieties, certain needs which he brings to the classroom,-- the need to be convalidated as a teacher, to be productive, to make a difference, to be fruitful. Insofar as they experience an atmosphere which meets those needs they will give all that they have and with enthusiasm. This parallels the situation in the counseling relationship. Client self-disclosure is radically dependent upon the sort of understanding environment that they are met with.

Teachers generally in fact protect themselves from having these needs known and they resort to certain attitudes and defenses in order to protect their vulnerability from the student. The main way in which they do this is to present the material in a simply objective detached way: they convey the material as factual information, something that exists out there for which they personally bear no responsibility. However, this is intrinsically fraudulent because as we have seen the information can only come through them and in their very selection of the material and the prioritising they do around it, they are intrinsically imbuing it with their own subjectivity. If they are to be able to give up these self-protective mechanisms and reveal their vulnerability to rejection, they have to be met with an atmosphere of acceptance, respect and understanding much as a client in therapy does. In this vulnerability, then, we see the teacher on the same model as a client. In that the teacher comes to any teaching situation desiring to be convalidated around his area of expertise, he or she is primarily in need of understanding from the student. The student, as does a counselor in therapy, has the power to either demean or convalidate the teacher in their knowledge and value as a teacher. However, in order to be able to see the teacher as in some way in need of their counseling the teacher himself has to be willing to reveal their intrinsic vulnerability as a teacher. It is the teacher who must first be willing to take the risk of being genuine in who he is with the students.

Student as counselor.

If, as we have said, the primary mode of learning for the student is the ability to enter into the world of the teacher; to leave their own world behind in order to take on the form of the teacher and see the world from his point of view, then in order to learn the student has, in fact, to become a counselor to the teacher; they need to create the atmosphere in which the teacher will truly self-disclose around the area in question. We define the counselor primarily as a learner, then, in that, on the one hand, in the therapeutic world he has to be able to learn the uniqueness of the client, and in the educational sphere to be open to the newness of the material presented in the uniqueness of the teacher.

To many this undoubtedly will seem a strange thing to say: are we asking that students actually be trained as counselors before they can be learners? To draw this conclusion would be to define

counseling too narrowly. The central skill in counseling is in fact the central skill in any good human communication and as such can be learned by almost anyone. While counseling properly speaking deals mainly with affective confusion and distress, and undoubtedly needs specialised training and knowledge, the central skill of understanding is relevant to any good communication process and is capable of being learned by anyone. Its difficulty stems not from its inherent nature but from the fact that it has not been taught to us in our socialisation process as a communication skill. The ability to listen well and respond with understanding is simply taken for granted. Wolvin and Coakley comment: "Spearritt, as well as other listening scholars, has advanced the argument that listening has received so little attention because of the assumption that growth in listening skills is automatic and, therefore, instruction is unnecessary. Since many children who come to first grade appear to have acquired -- without systematic training -- relatively adequate oral communication skills, many educators assume that through normal classroom activities at the various educational levels, students will develop listening skills sufficient to meet their needs." (Listening. W.C.Brown 1982. P18) Research by these same scholars, has shown that in fact the core ability to listen and understand so essential to education is in fact radically deficient. It does need to be taught and it is not an easy skill to learn, but the difficulties inherent in it are simply the difficulties inherent in the communication process itself. In that education is intrinsically an interpersonal communication process, the ability to respond in an understanding way ought not be seen as adding to its difficulties but as being simply part of it. Perhaps it needs to be emphasised also that the understanding is aimed not at the personal emotional difficulties of the teacher but at the material that the teacher is presenting. It is for this reason that we call it COGNITIVE COUNSELING.

However, in order to be able to engage themselves in the understanding process, the students do need to be taught how to be understanding. The major difficulty in this is the fact that the Cartesian/Newtonian paradigm has left us, as we have said, with the radical need to try and FIGURE OUT what another is saying. To understand is interpreted in this sense. Figuring out, then, is usually an attempt to fit what is being said into some already accepted understanding of the way things are. Because both student and teacher appear to live in the same objective world, it is assumed that what the student 'knows' and what the teacher 'knows' should mesh. It is a matter of trying to match them up. This is done by analysing what the teacher has said in terms of one's own catagories to see how well it fits. This mode of understanding has, of course, been prominent in the field of counseling, especially as it came to us out of the world of psycho-analysis, but it is part of the wider environment generated by the Cartesian/Newtonian paradigm. We will deal in more detail with this as we look at some of its effects. But this is a primary difficulty in teaching the listening and responding skills necessary to the process of understanding as we have defined it.

Genuine encounter of persons: student vulnerability.

The old model certainly did not encourage the student to meet the teacher in an understanding mode. In his power position as one who had 'figured-out' reality, he or she was seen as simply passing on abstract knowledge, in a somewhat detached manner, and, in order to get the requisite task done, if necessary, he could assert his superiority and power in a variety of ways and was almost expected to do so. Most students come to the classroom situation with this view of the teacher. They are requested to submit to his or her knowledge and power. They see the teacher in a superiority power position. This can itself bring out both the defenses of the student and the misuse of their own power over the teacher, something of which they are usually very much aware.

In the first place, the student intrinsically as a human being comes to the classroom with certain built-in needs for convalidation in their dignity and competance, their self-respect and capacity to make sense out of life for themselves. These are ego needs and if they are threatened in any way they can automatically activate their defenses. Fear of getting it wrong, making a fool of themselves, of being put down by the teacher can all result in a defensiveness in the learning situation.

In the second place what they already know is threatened: their view of the meaning of life and of who they are is under attack in a holistic way. Without attempting to be overly dramatic about it, new learning intrinsically threatens a change in the whole world/self view of the learner. As Cognitive dissonance theory tells us this will meet with a variety of strategies to avoid the necessary revision of our ideas and values that it might entail, from simply not hearing what what was said, through distortion of its meaning to fit what we already know, to attempts to discredit the person who is the source of the dissonance.

The threat is especially strong in those who come to us out of the dualistic Cartesian/Newtonian perspective which inevitably has built into it the notion of agreement and disagreement. There are built-in conflict possibilities in this model, authority and power-play tactics on the part of both teacher and student; defense and offense. The model itself in fact sets up dynamics that actually prevent learning. It produces an opposition between my truth and yours. In that it demands a certain submission to the teacher on the part of the student, it produces either conformism, a non-thinking acceptance of a factual set of meanings given an absolute status, or an inner opposition that results in what is called DEFENSIVE LEARNING in order to satisfy the requirements of a good grade. What it does not produce is a living incorporation of the material in a whole person way such that it actually serves to become part of the person and so bring about an expansion of personal possibilities and meanings and a reformulation of value systems. That will only take place to the extent that the student is able to participate in a way that safeguards his personal dignity and the capacity to incorporate

that which they have discerned as personally meaningful.

Acceptance of the subjective basis of all knowledge, however, takes away its absoluteness and allows for the active participation of the student without that severe threat to who they are and what they think. One principal in a college in Florida is reported to have told incoming freshmen that, by the time they left, half of what they had been taught would have been discovered to be incorrect. At the moment, however, they did not know which half. (Quoted Combs et al. "Helping Relationships." Allyn and Bacon. 1978) For those looking for an absolute set of objective meanings which mirror reality out there such a prospect is dispiriting. It is not dispiriting to those, however, who see learning and education as involvment in the community attempt to understand reality better and teachers as the entry point into that world. The educational process then becomes a collaborative effort to learn, through the teacher, what it is we understand our reality to be at this time and an ability to join in its ongoing development. Although it does involve a certain submission to the world and expertise of the teacher, it does not in itself demand agreement, just as in the counseling situation the counselor does not have to agree with the objective understanding of the situation that the client has come up with or the solution he or she devises as the best way forward for him or her. To deeply understand another's point of view then does not mean aggreement. The student will never learn without this willingness to understand but in understanding the student does not necessarily have to give up what he already truly believes in. His own ego needs to decide for him or herself the extent to which what is being said has validity and importance are respected, in fact may even be strengthened through the process. If the student does through his understanding come to see things differently then he will do so because the material is seen to have personal relevance and so comes to be personally owned.

Defenses against learning.

There is then a fundamental anxiety involved in learning anything new. This anxiety produces certain inherent barriers to the learning process. In that these barriers are not primarily a matter of intelligence or of motivation, they need to be met and dealt with by the teacher as part of the dynamics of the classroom. The teacher at least in the beginning and for quite a while into the learning process must be able to be a counselor to the student. He or she too must be able to enter into these emotional binds that are blocking the investment of the student in the material and articulate them if necessary. This in not a matter of dealing with emotional problems as such, things stemming from and related to external situations, but the emotional element bound up with the learning process itself. This can be done briefly within the class but more likely in time actually structured for it, some short time at the end of the class can be set aside for this.

These emotional barriers, generated out of the need to defend one's own dignity and knowledge will very often produce disguised

ways of asserting themselves against the teacher. This hidden aggression often comes in the form of questions. This is a tricky point to discuss since so much of our educational theory has in recent years devolved around getting the student to ask questions in the classroom. We have taken it as evidence of student involvement in the learning process and even give grades for it. However, just as in counseling it is wise not to respond to the asking of questions directly at least not as a first approach but rather to see them as disguised statements of the way the client is, so in the classroom. Questions are very often evident of defense mechanisms, a trying to hold away the impact of the new learning. In our indiscriminate encouragement to questioning in the classroom we have been unwittingly deepening the defences against learning.

However, it is important in this discussion that we make a distinction between QUESTIONING and QUESTING. The Cartesian/Newtonian framework that we mentioned as being all-pervasive of our cultural situation, also gave us the notion that the only way to learn was to 'put things into question". To look first of all to the limitations of what is being said, to critique it to hold it at arms length so to speak and try and find its weaknesses. This is the Cartesian process of METHODIC DOUBT. This automatic process of doubting what the teacher says is able to have such a hold over us because there is an inherent limitation to everything we say. We cannot say all that needs to be said and we cannot say it fully or adequately. The expectation that we can comes out of that notion that concepts mirror things out there; and, since reality is capable of being figured out, there should be a wholeness and an entirety about conceptualisations. Using the model of the jigsaw puzzle, the teacher is the one who knows how all the parts fit together. The student's questions then become ways of seeing other pieces of the puzzle not seen by the teacher and of showing or asking how those pieces fit in. The teacher out of his view of the whole is purposed to be able to show how it fits, ie. give an answer that will fit that piece in and close of the picture. If he cannot, then the student has succeeded in showing that the teacher does not have the picture of the whole.

From the point of view of the new paradigm, however, no conceptualisations are fully adequate to describe or convey aspects of experience. As Ivey and Simak-Downey say: "Language used by both clients and counselors can only be an approximation of reality. To describe one single moment's thought or experience may require thousands of words." (Counseling and Psychotherapy. Prentice-Hall. 1980. P177.) The teacher then as a client is inherently vulnerable to being put into question: he or she has not said all that can be said, nor necessarily have they said it with complete accuracy or adequacy. Just as in counseling a client may not actually say quite what they meant to say, or did not say it clearly and are therefore vulnerable to being challenged about what they did say, so too the teacher. In both the questions that come from the counselor or student can be experienced as a threat. It touches a genuine vulnerability and in

doing so allows us an ever-ready opening for asserting ourselves over against the teacher in a way which brings them down to size so to speak and renders them less threatening. We can then regain our sense of dignity and validity in who we are and what we know, the way we have figured out reality is superior to that of the teacher at least on particular points, catching the teacher on these, then, is a way of equelising the relationship.

We have learned from counseling, however, that the primary positive way for the inadequacy of what is being said to be overcome is not by questioning it but by trying to really understand it, by an attempt on the part of the learner/counselor to enter into the unclear communication and try to give it clearer conceptual form. This is what we term questing. It is a positive seeking with the other to bring clarity and adequacy into the communication process. It is the primary way in which clients are able to grow in an objective understanding of who they are and the situations they are in. There is a similar effect in the educational process. Hearing what they have tried to convey to the student accurately reflected in their response to them automatically activates the teacher's own evaluative faculty. If he is able in this process to recognise an inadequacy or even mistake and, providing the atmosphere is positive, he or she is much more easily able to correct or modify it. If it is simply that the person' presentation is in fact inadequate, this questing gives them both the feedback that they need as to how they are coming across and also a sense of dignity that what they are saying is worth the effort of understanding. They are, as we say, CONVALIDATED. Misunderstanding on the part of the student in itself, then, is not a barrier to the teacher's continued self-disclosure. Experience of this on the part of the student is also convalidating for him or her in that it takes the sting out of the necessity of having to get it right every time. This is very often a barrier within the student to actually trying to articulate his understanding of what is being presented.

However, under the guise of trying to understand, we often resort to the process of questioning and the questions come under the disguise of "I'm trying to understand what it is you are saying." The implication is that you are not being clear and that this is a deficiency in you. At root this, too, is a protective mechanism, but not a necessarily a malicious one. The background again is largely responsible. As we have seen it is expected that we ought to be able to figure out what is being said. But ought we? The possibility of figuring out only holds if we share the same framework of perceptions and values: our hidden assumptions as to what is real and what is not. Figuring out in this sense then is a matter of seeing how what one person is saying fits into the assumptions we already have as to what is real and what is not. A further hidden assumption is that we share the same set of assumptions. According to Athos and Gabarro this basic assumption is the one which results in most miscommunication. They write: "These process assumptions can be much greater barriers to communication than our content assumptions, because they keep us from discovering that our content assumptions may differ; and for

this reason they can be especially dangerous. For example, consider the following assumptions we often make in day to day communications with others:
--that the other person perceives the situation the way we do.
--that the other person is making the same inferences and assumptions that we are.
--that what is taking place should be logical from our point of view.
--that the communication process in a given situation has little or no relation to other events in the situation, or to past history. (Op.cit. P59.)

Trying to figure out what the other is saying is, then, primarily a way of trying to make sense out of it in terms of our own framework of reference, who we already are, especially what it is that I already have accepted as true and valid in a particular area. Not to be able to do this is to be faced with the possible necessity of having to change. The uniqueness of it is itself 'putting our world into question' and making a challenge to us to change.

Accretive, replicative, and mutualistic relationships.

George Lock Land is helpful in understanding what is going on here. (see 'Grow or Die' Random House New York 1973). He delinlates three modes of growth that are present in the whole of nature: accretive, replicative and mutualistic. Accretive growth is primarily the ingesting of material or information from the outside that will fit into what we already are and enable us to grow bigger. The emphasis here is on who we already are. The pattern of our world, physically, socially or emotionally and intellectually dictates what can be received, assimilated and so enlarge that world. The important word is the 'same.' In the educational process it is a matter of assimilating only that which affirms and strengthens who we are already. We either do not hear anything different or we simply reject it.

The second level is that of replicative growth. In replicative growth we reach out into the world in order to change it to become like ourselves in some way. We replicate ourselves into the world so that it looks like us. Differences here are acknowledged but still seen as threats and so to be changed and molded to look like us. Here we then try to change the environment to look like us, to reflect more the way we are. In the learning process it is a matter of either reinterpreting the new material in a way that looks like what we already know or if that is not possible engaging in argument to try to persuade the source of that material that they ought to change their views. This does not have to be done directly but indirectly. Questions here, showing up the limitations or questioning the universal application of what has been said, can be disguised ways of doing this. I think it is true to say that most of us adults tend to go to learning experiences and feel good about them when in fact we have achieved either of these two sorts of growth. We have either gained more information reinforcing who we already are or we have been able to give input into the occassion which brought what was

being said closer to the way we think. We brought people to a measure of agreement with who we are and the way we see things.

The third level of growth that Lock Land deliniates is that of mutualistic growth in which the differences that are inherent in the situation are recognised and assimilated in a way that produces something different. They become sources of mutual enrichment. The differences are of central importance in the exchange and produce mutual modification. In our terms this is the true learning situation because it actually takes into account the realities of the situation, that, in fact, what the teacher is saying, because it is new and different from what the student knows, of necessity challenges the student to a modification of his views of himself and his world and a transformation of his self-investments, his value system.

The normal learning situation is, however, not mutualistic but at its best a sort of mid-stage between replicative and mutualistic. It is replicative in that the teacher is reaching out to enable the students to become like himself and the student is there in order to become more like the teacher, or to become like the teacher around the area of expertise. The teacher is replicative-selfing as Lock Land puts it, the student is replicative-othering to use his other term. It is, however, possible to begin to move to the mutualistic stage providing, on the one side, the student is willing to reach out to the teacher not in methodic doubt but with METHODIC TRUST.

Starting from the position that the teacher does know adequately what it is he is standing for and trying to get across, that there is something of value that can be learned and, out of a willingness to try to understand clearly and comprehensively what it is the teacher is actually saying rather than looking for possible gaps, the students attempt to see how well it illuminates aspects of their experience and so enables them to see the data in a more discriminating way. Out of this then will come a deep questing with the teacher around the material as against a questioning of it. In this questing the individuality of the student comes to the fore and begins to invest itself in the material, seeking to render it personally relevant as far as they are able at that point. In the experience itself it is fairly easy for the teacher to detect the difference in the two modes. Even when the response is one in the form of a question there is a real sense that the material has been understood and the person is trying to internalise it and relate it to his experience.

The ability to evoke this questing-with also depends on the teacher preparing the material in the best possible way, that is, in a way that, as well as he or she can judge, would most speak to the experience of the student so that the student can fit it into some aspect of their actual experience. Lock Land makes the point that new information can only be assimilated if in fact it has some hook in the person on which to hang. The teacher in this sense has first to understand the student in that he is willing and able to try to get to what the student's experience might be.

In a way this really means that the teacher has to get to the level of his common experience with the student as a human being. He has got to come down to their level in order to bring the student in some little way up to his level. It is at this point that the knowledge that the teacher possesses as to human dynamics becomes relevant. He is not presenting the material in such a way as to manipulate the student into accepting it, but is using his knowledge of the student or students in a way that they can relate it to their experience. His primary instrument in doing this is his knowledge of himself as sharing a common humanity with the students. In knowing himself around the area of his knowledge, he draws on this in a way that enables the students to engage with him on that level. In this way he renders himself capable of being invested in but in a way which draws out and validates the student's individuality.

Overcoming defenses.

We call this process a matter of mutual INCARNATION and REDEMPTION. Incarnation in that it demands a mutual entering into one another's world, the student through understanding entering into the world of the teacher around the material that is actually being presented, and validates the teacher in his giving of the material, mitigating anxiety and enabling self-diclosure to take place; the teacher by entering the world of the student and taking it into consideration in the way the material is presented and, furthermore, is able and willing to understand the student in his basic anxieties and inherent learning blocks. It is redemptive in that it gives each a sense of being of value in who they are and in what they can become: the student in beig willing to understand the teacher and so be changed through the teacher, thus making his knowledge and efforts fruitful, the teacher in that they understand in an accepting way the difficulties of the student and are willing to enter into them and receive them without retaliation, affirming what the student is able to understand and working to enlarge that understanding.

The result is focused learning. There is an intrinsic discipline in the process that is similar to the discipline exercised by people who engage in team sports. There is a task to be accomplished and each person on the team has their role in the accomplishment of that task: the teacher to present, the student to learn. In their need for mutual understanding in this process, neither is inherently superior to the other, both need one another if the task is to be successfully accomplished. It demands of both a self-discipline, a curtailment of the power each possesses over the other. On the teacher's side a curtailment of the power to demean through the use of superior knowledge, or of his impatience at the student, especially in the early stages of the learning process, and, instead, a willingness to pay close attention to the experience of the students and a willingness to present material in a way that these students can enter into it. On the student's side, a willingness to curtail his ability to render void what the teacher has prepared and is trying to present , either by not learning, or by extraneous and peripheral questions, or by diverting the teacher in some other way.

Genuine encounter of persons: student isolation.

Also built into the cartesian model is the notion of isolated learning. Objective meanings are simply passed on from individual head to individual head. It is a matter of each student independently picking up the meanings proposed by the teacher. This amalgamated with the competative environment, created as one way of manipulating students into learning, means that students actually learn, not just in isolation from one another but also in opposition to one another. This stands in stark contrast with the very nature of education as the introduction of the student into the community's on-going efforts to discern the meaning of our common reality in order to realise our potential as human beings and as an historical community. This isolation of the students from one another in the learning task, however, mirrors the isolation of the individual within society itself. Society is seen as that from which we draw the wherewithal to function as individuals in a way which realises our own fulfilment. There is then an essential competitiveness for the communal resources which characterises our common life together. It is what Maslow called a non-sygernistic society: ie. each prospers but at the expense of the other. The disastrous consequences of this for our common life today are increasingly being realised. An article in U.S and World Report some years ago posed the question: 'Is the search for human rights tearing America apart?" The intent of the article was not to question the important notion of human rights and the safeguarding of them but the extent to which individuals and groups were giving their idiosyncratic rights such an absoluteness over against others that society was being so polarised that the common fabric of our lives together was being threatened. The point of mentioning this is to highlight how in the educational process we can perpetuate the notion of the isolated individual simply trying to get what he wants from the teacher in isolation from the others in the class and even at their expense. The extent to which some students have this competative attitude towards others in the class is quite horrifying on occassions, extending to the hiding of books needed by others, to putting pressure on bright students not to do well in order to keep the grade curve from going too high.

Where education is seen from the point of view of isolated learning then competitiveness would seem to be built in. Indeed it has been encouraged by the practice of using grades as a manipulative tool to encourage learning. Grades can be used in a positive way as indicating the level of competance a person has around the material, but all too often they seem to become ways of indicating one's worth relative to other students in the class. They then become sources of possible shame vis-a-vis the other students and are even used in that way to motivate students to try to do better than one another. However, to see education as the way in which a person is able to enter into the community's creative task of understanding and forming the world, means that the primary experience of that communal task needs to take place precisely in the classroom with the other students. What needs to be created is an environment in which each of the stud-

ents is able to learn in and through one another, such that the personal input of one enriches the other and furthers their understanding of the material. With this the competitive element with all its hidden antagonisms and anxieties is lessened and a mutually supportive and encouraging atmosphere is engendered. This can also lead to an acceptance of the student's level of adequacy in the subject without demeaning them. The less bright benefit from the more bright, the more bright come to value the input of the less bright and so on. Both are convalidated as we say and the learning process becomes a team effort in the best sense of the word somewhat in parallel to the sort of team unity involved in sports where the contributions of each are seen as valuable and necessary.

Included in the generation of this atmosphere is the ability to share with one another their difficulties and confusions around the material being presented. In our framework this is done in what we call REFLECTION TIME. During this period the students talk with one another around their ideas and feeling with regards to the material, facilitated by the teacher as a sort of group counselor. In and through the teacher as group counselor, they come to know one another and surface common difficulties and also out of their individual understanding of the material elucidate and even resolve individual and common problems and confusions. What each, then, has learned becomes a source of learning for the others.

CONCLUSION.

The end result of this form of learning process as we see it, then, is a community environment in which each person has his proper and vital responsibility in the task of coming to know the material in question in a holistic way. As the defenses are dropped and the learning becomes unself-consciously focused on the subject matter in a mutually convalidating way, the learning that results is integrated into the experiential world of the person such that he both understands it better, retains it longer and is able to discover a new way of being and acting around it. In other words it is growthful. It is learning that the student becomes invested in as a person, integrated around it emotionally as well as intellectually; the teacher grows in seeing his work take root in the soil of each person and bring forth new and unexpected fruit, imbued with the uniqueness of each individual. We call this finally an INSEMINATIONAL-GEMINATIONAL process of learning. The teacher plants the seed and the student receives and nurtures it but brings forth fruit that is uniquely his own. Students, then, are strengthened in their inner capacity to decide for themselves in a more informed way around the area of concern, their capacity for self-directed learning is deepened and they develop the ability to dialogue with others and their community in a creative and growthful way, able both to take a stand for what it is they think is true and good and able to understand others in their different perspectives and values.

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